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ABSTRACT

This document is the introductory module of a 9-module set within an 11-unit resource pack designed to help trainers and postsecondary and continuing education staff meet the needs of special needs students in Great Britain. Having completed this module, staff should be able to: (1) recognize and counter the effects of stereotyped images and assumptions about special needs students; (2) understand the difference between impairment, disability, handicap, and special need; (3) recognize the negative connotations of some terminology and avoid using it; (4) describe students with special needs in positive terms; (5) describe how not feeling "able" may affect one's self-image; (6) identify the major features of their institution's policy on special needs; and (7) implement a task to promote the participation of students with special needs in their workplace. The module contains five sections. Section 1 explores the relationship between the teacher, student, and curriculum. Staff are encouraged to help special needs students become more responsible for their own learning and develop the skills to recognize and express their own needs. Section 2 explores attitudes toward students with special needs. Section 3 introduces the practical issues involved in analyzing student needs. Section 4 looks at a framework for building a program for special needs students which includes identification of values and needs and phases for design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and review. Section 5 is designed to help the student apply the program's framework. Eleven exercises are included in the module. (CML)

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LEARNING SUPPORT

INTRODUCTORY ELEMENT

CE 055 289

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INTRODUCTION

The **Introductory Element** is intended to:

- develop your understanding and experience of what is involved in working with people who have special needs;
- help you to identify the attitudes and approaches needed in such work;
- introduce you to the needs of the learners concerned;
- identify the overall approach to the planning and delivery of programmes;
- provide an overview of the range of issues examined in the pack.

The **Introductory Element** consists of five sections:

Section 1. Setting the scene

- explores the relationship between teacher, student and curriculum, or trainer, trainee and training programme

Section 2. Awareness of special education/training needs

- explores attitudes to, and understanding of, learners with special needs

Section 3. Undertaking an analysis of needs

- gives an introduction to the practical issues involved

Section 4. Establishing a framework

- looks at the main features involved in building a programme

Section 5. Applying the framework

- helps in applying the framework in practice

SECTION 1. SETTING THE SCENE

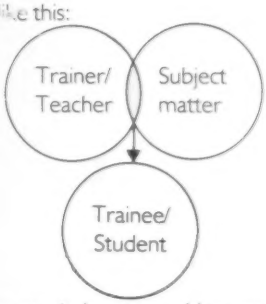
This section introduces some of the basic features that you need to be aware of when working with learners with special needs. The focus is on the nature of learning and on how the teacher, the learner, and the context in which they operate, are interrelated.

People with special needs are to be found at all levels of the education and training process, from part-time college or training courses to full-time degree courses. The needs, of course, will be very different, but it is our belief that the training package will contain something of relevance to all; however, the primary focus is on trainees and students with some degree of learning difficulty.

The relationship between teacher student and curriculum or trainer, trainee and training programme, is complex.

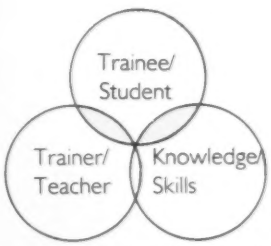
One approach used frequently in education and training stresses the relationship between the teacher/trainer and the subject matter. The subject matter is transmitted to the student/trainee.

This approach looks something like this:



This approach, while it has some merit, has proved less successful in catering for the needs of new client groups and new curriculum frameworks and training programmes. The impact of integrated programmes and vocational training with the emphasis on competence through the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, appropriate attitudes and experience, has led to another approach.

It looks something like this:



Here the three features overlap and interlock. Initial planning focuses on the current abilities and identified needs of the learner. These inform the development of progammes, which then incorporate appropriate knowledge and skills. The role of the trainer/teacher is to enable needs to be met by providing the required structure and approaches to learning.

Thus, the teacher/trainer should:

- know about the subject matter or content of the programme;
- understand the needs of learners;
- know something about the learning patterns of the students/trainees;
- be able to provide approaches and techniques which enable learning to take place.

Remember, we are dealing with individuals, each with their own particular ways of learning. This list below is intended only to illustrate some general features of learning, particularly in relation to those who have learning difficulties.

- Consider the pace of learning and add more steps if necessary. This may appear obvious but needs to be re-emphasised.
- Find ways of presenting material and ideas so that you do not rely only on verbal explanations.
- Concrete experience may be necessary to promote learning.
- Structure and direction are necessary for spontaneous learning to occur.
- There may be a need to practise skills and competences in a range of different situations to enable generalisation and transfer of learning.
- Interest is usually concentrated on situations which are immediate and relevant to the learner's own experience. This indicates a need for direct experience to maintain motivation.
- There is a strong need for success to be immediate and recognised.
- Self-direction and independent working are helped by a familiar structure within which students/trainees can gain self confidence.
- Students/trainees may need extra support to develop a number of skills including communication, physical co-ordination, etc.
- Students/trainees may have personal action plans or individual programme plans which nonetheless emphasise the ability to work within groups and to develop social interaction skills. Individual programme plans are not meant to be developed in isolation from group activities.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN FEATURES OF THIS APPROACH?

- The content and aims of programmes are drawn from the needs of young people themselves, rather than a predetermined syllabus. The work is becoming 'student-/trainee-centred'. It starts from what the learner *can do* and builds on individual achievement.
- The traditional model of teaching/training, implying the one-way flow of information from teacher/trainer to student/trainee, is less relevant. Students'/trainees' previous knowledge, experience and interests are used instead to identify starting points. The training programme/curriculum should provide opportunities for learning skills relevant to the learners' adult lives.
- Education and training are complementary. Education includes training, and training is a part of education, so the educational process is often made accesssible through training activities. Objectives are set in terms of understanding, competence, attitudes and judgement, and skills are not developed in isolation. For example, in working with wood, the learners are simultaneously developing hand/eye co-ordination, numeracy skills, aesthetic awareness and judgements about quality. The nature of learning and education is to develop a whole range of skills and knowledge in an integrated way so knowledge, skills and experience gained in one area are used to build on or consolidate that used in another.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FEATURES FOR STUDENTS/TRAINEES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

a) Coming to terms with the responsibilty placed on them for their own learning.

Many have had previous experience of being either protected or ignored. In some instances, they may have been understandably protected by parents or in their earlier

education. The tradition of special education has been to focus on the lacks or deficits in basic skills and attempt some remedial work, often in a separate setting. The effects of segregation have been well documented. They can lead to an underestimation of abilities, consequent under-achievement and a failure to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Equally, the trainee/student with special needs may have struggled in a mainstream school, or been ignored, with much the same result.

Others may have shown challenging behaviour which has led to conflict in previous settings. This may have resulted in a fragmented educational experience and under-achievement. They may have come to view those in authority with suspicion, and themselves as lacking in worth.

b) Developing the skills to recognise and express their needs.

Like many others, students/trainees with special needs may lack the confidence and ability to identify what they want or require. They need to develop self-advocacy skills in order to learn how to present ideas and explore interests.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FEATURES FOR STAFF WORKING WITH STUDENTS/TRAINEES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

a) Examining their own approaches and attitudes towards students/trainees.

Emphasis is laid on *working with* students/trainees. This demands developing an understanding of their needs and attitudes. It also involves establishing positive approaches towards them rather than looking on them as in some way deficient or inadequate. Learners with special needs are legitimate learners. [Further exploration of attitudes is to be found in Section 2 of this **Introductory Element**.]

b) Understanding and being able to analyse needs and use appropriate strategies to support students/trainees with special needs.

This involves exploring current practice and identifying ways in which planning, delivery and assessment need to be modified or new approaches sought. It is largely a case of enhancing existing skills and practice rather than doing anything radically different.

c) Providing a framework within which subject matter can be structured to provide students/trainees with opportunities to develop appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

2. AWARENESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION/ TRAINING NEEDS

This section questions the kind of assumptions we make. It is designed to help in recognising how individuals and institutional structures impose handicaps on those trainees/students with special education/training needs. It should challenge you to recognise and consequently avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping. It should also enable you to take positive action to ensure that these students/trainees have the same rights of access to resources and quality of provision as anyone else.

Positive attitudes towards trainees/students with special needs enable positive approaches to teaching/training.

We have already commented on the importance of recognising the individual needs of each student/trainee. This is essential if we are to begin to meet special education/training needs. Planning should be based on the needs of individuals, and a learner-centred approach and individual learning programmes should be developed.

SIGNPOST

Element 3, Devising Individual Learning Programmes, considers this issue.

When we start to talk about special education/training needs, it is easy to jump to conclusions about the sort of people we are referring to. Yet we must guard against making assumptions about the perceived needs of groups of people just because they bear the same administrative label. Their characteristics and needs will be as varied and as individual as for any group of students/trainees. The only thing students/trainees with special education/ training needs have in common is their need for 'something extra' to enable them to learn and to participate fully in a course or training programme. This could include:

SIGNPOST

Element 5, Training/ Teaching and Learning Strategies, deals with trainee-/student-centred approaches.

- individual guidance sessions;
- adapted learning materials;
- extra time to complete tasks;
- extra support to develop social relationships.

Guidelines for facilitators

PLEASE READ THE ADVICE BELOW BEFORE USING THIS SECTION.

When delivering this section of the pack, you are strongly advised to work with a staff trainer who has experience of disability awareness and equality training. The activities can be challenging for some staff so skilled facilitation is recommended to ensure positive outcomes. There are experienced trainers with disabilities or other special needs, who are available to help you with this.

The following materials have all been tested in the format given, in a variety of settings.

It is not necessary to work systematically through all the activities. You can select, reorder and substitute your own activities, depending on your circumstances.

EXERCISE 1

Activity for two groups

Most people do not realise how their attitudes to people with special education/training needs are influenced by stereotyped images. This exercise should illustrate some common stereotypes. It should enable the participants to examine their own attitudes so they will be aware of the problems they may create in the workplace.

Form two groups to explore each of the subjects below.

Give each group a different subject.

The subjects are:

1. Trainee or student
2. Trainee with special training needs or student with special education needs

Ask each group to brainstorm the subject by calling out the first thoughts, words and images which come to mind.

Here are some typical examples for each subject:

1. Trainee or student: classes, learning, work, problems, exams
2. Trainee with special training needs or student with special education needs: time, wheelchair, slow, difficult, patience, aggressive

One person from each group should list the suggestions until the group runs out of ideas.

It is important to organise the two groups so they cannot hear or be influenced by each other.

Bring the two groups together and, through discussion, identify and underline all the negative statements on the list.

Draw attention, if the groups have not done so themselves, to the differences and, particularly, any major omissions on the special education/training needs list.

Items which are often omitted from the special needs list are such positive points as qualifications, employment, progression, etc.

Discuss the implications of these omissions in terms of:

- education/training opportunities;
- employment opportunities;
- social opportunities.

EXERCISE 2

Small group activity

Give each participant either an X, Y or Z task sheet.

Ask participants to form small groups determined by the letter on their task sheet (i.e. all the Xs together).

Ask the groups to discuss the questions and to prepare to give feedback. Ask each group (X, Y and Z) to report back their conclusions to the whole group.

Record the conclusions from each group on flipcharts.

Discuss any differences that have emerged, drawing attention to expectations for factors such as:

- employment
- home
- relationships
- status in society

Conclude the exercise with a brief comment from each participant on the range of stereotypes elicited.

TASK SHEET X

X is just 16 years old. He has just passed GCSEs in English, Maths, Geography, Biology and French.

He is interested in photography and reads a lot.

He lives in the Midlands and has one sibling.

What do you imagine X's life will be like in ten years time?

TASK SHEET Y

Y is just 16 years old. She has just passed GCSEs in English, Maths, Geography, Biology and French.

She is interested in photography and reads a lot.

She lives in the Midlands and has one sibling.

What do you imagine Y's life will be like in ten years time?

TASK SHEET Z

Z is just 16 years old and has just passed GCSEs in English, Maths, Geography, Biology and French.

Z's interests are photography and reading.

Z lives in the Midlands and has one sibling.

Z is a wheelchair user and has some speech impairment.

What do you imagine Z's life will be like in ten years time?

EXERCISE 3

This exercise employs a questionnaire which is intended to encourage you to look at some common assumptions and to raise relevant issues.

It may be used in various ways:

- individually, to check on changing attitudes and views
- as a stimulus to group discussion
- as a checklist to review and consolidate experience

QUESTIONNAIRE
Circle **T** (true) or **F** (false).

1. A visually impaired trainee/student in a business/office skills programme would need to have all materials in braille.	T	F
2. A disabled trainee/student is usually most suited to a general/basic level programme.	T	F
3. An older person enrolled to retrain for health or caring occupations might be the least self-assured learner on the programme.	T	F
4. Those with limited communication skills learn best in the same way.	T	F
5. A trainee/student with severe learning difficulties should not enrol for a car mechanic/repair programme because she/he could not understand the various concepts involved in internal combustion engines.	T	F
6. Naturally, someone with a physical disability will have high motivation to succeed in the programme.	T	F
7. Trainees/students with severe learning difficulties often have behaviour problems which require specialist counselling and treatment.	T	F
8. Posters in your workshop/teaching room should never portray people with special educational/training needs in menial positions.	T	F
9. 'Able' learners will progress faster than those with special needs.	T	F
10. People with learning difficulties need constant close supervision because they cannot learn responsibility.	T	F
11. It is unlikely that a trainee/student in a wheel-chair would have the same personal problems as other learners.	T	F
12. It is your responsibility to know the symptoms of an epileptic attack if you have someone with epilepsy in your programme.	T	F
13. The programme a person with a physical disability enters is up to the specialist staff.	T	F
14. Women with learning difficulties should have to do the same heavy lifting in practical mechanical classes as other learners.	T	F
15. The progress made by people with special needs reflects the quality of your teaching/training.	T	F
16. People with special needs might need help to understand the need for career planning skills.	T	F
17. Older learners on retraining programmes are more likely to respect your role as a teacher/trainer.	T	F
18. Minimum performance standards should not be lowered to allow trainees/students with learning difficulties to succeed in trade and industrial programmes.	T	F

9

19. A learner with physical impairment which limits his/her endurance, would be prevented from using machines that require prolonged standing. T F
20. As a teacher/trainer you should contribute to decisions about the acceptance of learners with special needs, on to your programme. T F
21. It doesn't matter how you relate to your trainees/students with special needs personally, as long as you teach them the knowledge and skills they need. T F
22. You cannot meet the real learning needs of those with special educational needs unless you provide individual learning programmes within your classroom/workshop. T F
23. Visually impaired or blind students should not be allowed into workshops unless they can read the safety signs. T F
24. It is unsafe for people who cannot read to work with machinery until safety measures have been explained to them. T F
25. Trainees/students who use computers as communication aids will probably catch up quickly with other learners in information technology programmes. T F
26. Lack of discipline is a basic problem for people with special educational/ training needs. T F
27. There are things that you can do to help those with special needs who have low self-esteem. T F
28. People who have been deaf since birth may have difficulty understanding the language you use on worksheets. T F
29. Trainees/students with special needs should be required to work indeper dently. T F
30. You can help someone who lipreads by exaggerating your lip movements. T F
31. You will need to give those with special education/training needs more attention than others. T F
32. It is helpful to visually impaired people if you keep equipment and furniture in the same place. T F
33. Some people with special needs prefer to be known as disabled rather than handicapped. T F
34. What is 'special' about special needs is the extra support and help required. T F
35. It is important to prepare your other trainees/students before a disabled member joins the course/training programme. T F
36. It is unfair to use different assessment methods for people with special needs. T F
37. You will find it easier to meet special needs if you know something about the causes of individual disabilities. T F

QUESTIONNAIRE CHECK-LIST Compare your answers with the discussions of the statements given below.

1. False. Some visually impaired people can read materials using magnifiers. If the trainee/student cannot see at all, materials other than braille could be used, e.g. audio tapes.
2. False. Some may, given the extra support they need, be able to cope with programmes at any level. There is no reason why the trainee/student should not have a particular aptitude or talent for the course/training programme.
3. True. Adults returning to education/training often feel insecure because they have been away from formal training for a long time
4. False. There is nothing about people with communication difficulties to suggest they all learn best in the same way. You need to consider each individual learning style and provide individualised programmes to accommodate that style.
5. False. She/he may be able to learn to perform the required skills although she/he does not necessarily understand the theory. The long-term goal for this trainee/student might be to become a helper rather than a skilled mechanic.
6. False. A learner with a physical disability could just as easily have low motivation. 'Naturally' implies a stereotype which may or may not hold good for any individual.
7. False. This remark is the worst kind of stereotype; some people with learning difficulties have behaviour problems, some don't. Even where someone does have behaviour problems, it is the teacher/trainer's responsibility to serve in an advisory/guidance role. It is equally important to know when to turn to specialist advice.
8. False. Posters may portray people with special needs in menial positions as long as they are balanced by posters portraying prestigious, high-income positions as well. Other people – able/disabled, black/white, male/female – should be represented in high- and low-status positions too.
9. False. This is not necessarily the case. Some people with special needs, given appropriate support will be able to progress just as fast (or as slowly) as any other. Others will learn more slowly.
10. People with learning difficulties can often learn responsibility if they are given the opportunity. To assume otherwise without having tried is to avoid your responsibility to teach both the content and the learners.
11. False. Paraplegic learners in wheelchairs are ordinary people just like anyone else. They may have exactly the same personal problems.
12. True. You should ensure that you can recognise an epileptic attack. You should know how to deal with a major attack and when to summon extra help.
13. False. The programme anyone enters should be governed by that individual's interests and goals. You have a responsibility to provide an input into the placement decision because you are most likely to be familiar with the requirements of the area.
14. True. All students – male/female, able/disabled – need the opportunity to develop the physical strength necessary to do the heavy lifting required by this type of occupation. It would not be helpful for some to help others out with heavy lifting.
15. True. Those with special needs are especially dependent on high-quality teaching/training. It is part of your responsibility to ensure, by constant monitoring, that adequate progress is made.
16. True. While trainees/students with special needs might be aware of the benefits of career planning, they might not be. These people may never have seen someone with the same difficulties as themselves get ahead, nor even realise it is possible.
17. True. Adults are more likely to respect your role. They probably went to school at a time when teacher/learner relationships were far more formal than now. Anyone who has been out of education/training for a long while may need help in adjusting to informal teaching/training methods.
18. False. The level of skill a trainee/student needs in performing any task is determined by performance criteria. Some may need extra time or help in achieving those minimum standards.

19. False. The answer is to adapt the machine and arrange for it to be lowered or a high stool provided. The answer is not to exclude the individual.
20. True. You should be one of the people contributing to that decision (See 13.).
21. False. How you relate to people with special needs, matters a great deal. It is essential to consider each trainee/student as an individual and as a whole person.
22. True. You can help all learners by providing flexible individualised programmes.
23. False. If someone cannot read the safety signs, you should make sure he or she knows about safety by using the best means for the individual. This could include braille signs, audiotaped instructions or telling each person individually.
24. True. As with 23, you must find the best way of doing this for each individual.
25. False. Just because someone is used to using computers for one function, does not mean she or he will be any better or any worse than any other trainee/student. The assumption that they will have to 'catch up' is based on a false stereotype.
26. False. Some people with special needs may have discipline problems but discipline is not the basic problem. Ensuring that work is relevant and challenging, through flexible individual programmes, is the best way of avoiding such difficulties.
27. True. There is much you can do, in an advisory or guidance role, to help anyone with low self esteem. Providing for success and giving positive reinforcement of success is a valuable strategy.
28. True. Prelingually deaf students may not have had the opportunity to develop the language structures we take for granted. You may need to provide simplified or illustrated worksheets to help. On the other hand, some people who have been deaf since birth have excellent communication skills.
29. False. No one should be *required* to work alone, but any trainee/student should be *allowed* to work individually if that is the way she/he learns best. Some trainees/students with special needs may need extra practice in working co-operatively, in groups.
30. False. This will not help at all, indeed it is likely to make it harder for the lipreader. Speak clearly and slightly slower, making sure you are in a good light and do not cover your mouth while speaking. This will be helpful.
31. False. You should ensure that all trainees/students have your attention when necessary. Someone with special needs may have to wait his or her turn like everyone else. You will need to ensure that you can give everyone *individual* attention.
32. True. If a trainee/student has very poor vision he/she will need to memorise where things are. If you must make changes make sure you explain them to her/him.
33. True. However, disability and handicap mean different things. Most people would prefer to be thought of as individuals, first and foremost. As disability is handicapping only when it prevents a person from doing something.
34. True. The definition of a special education/training need is that it requires something over and above that normally provided for trainees/students. The support mechanism is central in providing that extra 'something'.
35. False. How would you feel if someone gave a short description of your shortcomings before you joined a course or training programme? Some people may wish to tell their fellow trainees/students something about themselves to facilitate communication. You should always take your cue from the person him/herself.
36. False. Any method of assessment is acceptable as long as it measures the same performance criteria as the standard assessment procedure. You may need to make special examination arrangements for some people.
37. False. The cause of a condition tells you nothing about how someone learns or the best way of helping him/her to learn.

3. UNDERTAKING AN ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

How do you analyse the needs of the trainee/student?

1. Where does the information come from?

   Background information can be obtained from a number of sources such as:

   - reports
   - statements
   - interviews

   Information obtained from these sources may or may not be:

   - accurate
   - objective
   - available to you

   An important source is the trainee/student her/himself. By observing the performance or activity of the trainee/student you can identify current abilities and achievements. To facilitate this you can set up activities to enable you to observe the trainee/student at work.

SIGNPOST
Element 4, **Assessment and Review**, deals with sources of information.]

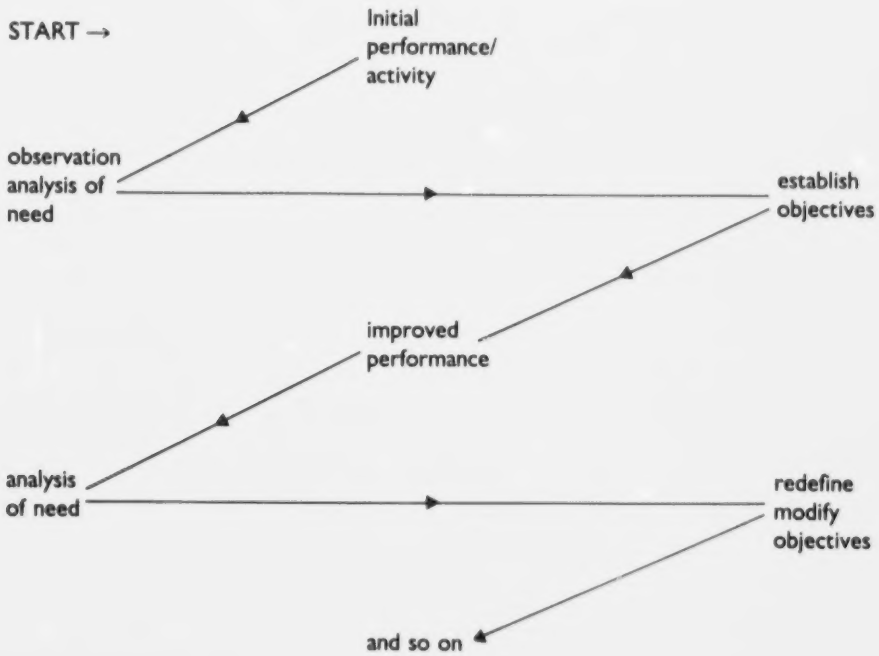
2. How do you use this information to plan?

   The information you have obtained through observation gives you starting points for planning. You should derive your objectives from the trainees'/students' current levels of performance. The objectives should provide the experience to develop knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes.

   Throughout the course/training programme you should observe the performance of the trainee/student to monitor progress and improved performance. This in turn enables you to develop new objectives. Figure 1 illustrates the process.

SIGNPOST
Element 3, **Devising individual learning programmes**, examines this process.]

Figure 1. Analysing needs from observation of performance



EXERCISE 4A. DEFINITIONS

Individual work

The language we use reflects our attitudes. The next two exercises enable you to examine the words you use.

Give the participants Task Sheet A.

Ask them to complete it individually.

Collect several examples of completed sheets.

Discuss the definitions provided by the group members.

Draw attention to any implicit assumptions and value judgements which have been made.

A list of comments which were made during the testing of these materials is provided.

Guidelines for facilitators

While the next activity is in progress, you may wish to write on a spare sheet of paper a few examples of the words written by the participants. This may be photocopied and distributed for a final whole-group discussion of the issue.

TASK SHEET A

Write down the *first thing* that comes into your mind as you read the following words:

- behaviour problem
- exceptional
- deaf
- trainee/student with special needs
- disruptive
- mental handicap
- mongol
- problem
- bright
- dyslexic
- difficult behaviour
- able
- intelligent
- maladjusted
- slow
- gifted
- disadvantaged
- epileptic
- learning difficulty
- crippled
- partially sighted
- person with a disability
- special needs trainee/student

CHECK-LIST

This is a selection of comments which have been made.

- behaviour problem:

  difficult;
  disaffected;
  aggressive

- exceptional:

  bright;
  outstanding;
  rude

- disruptive:

  nuisance;
  boring;
  throwing furniture

- mental handicap:

  thick;
  horrible word;
  Tony

- deaf:

  hearing aid;
  sign language;
  funny speech;
  tinnitus

- trainee/student with special needs:

  dribbling;
  inadequate;
  fat

- bright:

  clever;
  sparkling;
  lively;
  humorous

- dyslexic:

  panic;
  spelling;
  not obvious;

- difficult behaviour:

  arrogant;
  patience;
  time

- able:

  capable;
  needing little help;
  precocious

- intelligent:

  responsive;
  lucky;
  alert;
  good worker

- maladjusted:

  violent;
  disruptive;
  hopeless;
  unfortunate

- disabled:

  limited;
  wheelchair;
  orange disc

- slow:

  patience;
  steady;
  frustrated;
  retarded

- mongol:

  short and squat;
  smiling;
  affectionate;
  Downs syndrome

- problem:

  trouble;
  bad language;
  challenge

- gifted:

  successful;
  brilliant;
  genius;
  quick

- disadvantaged:

  unfortunate;
  broken home;
  unlucky;
  sad

- epileptic:

  fit;
  fear;
  medication;
  danger

- learning difficulty:

  frustrating;
  slow;
  time;
  patience

- crippled:

  spastic;
  ugly word;
  victim;
  limited

- partially sighted:

  thick glasses;
  white stick;
  different

- person with a disability:

  apprehensive;
  needs help;
  anybody

- special needs trainee/student:

  give help;
  separate;
  slow

EXERCISE 4B. DEFINITIONS

Small group activity

Give each participant Task Sheet, Definitions.

Ask the participants to form small groups to discuss the terms.

Each group should produce a written definition of the terms on the sheet.

Ask each small group to report back on the discussion plus the definitions to the whole group.

An information sheet giving various definitions is provided to assist the facilitator.

Discuss the differences in definitions.

Compare with the definitions provided.

Whole group activity

Analyse any variations.

TASK SHEET B

Write down your definition of the following terms:

- Handicap
- Disability
- Impairment
- Special educational need/special training need

CHECK-LIST

The following definitions of 'handicap', 'impairment' and 'disability' have been provided by the World Health Organisation (1980) and the Fish Report (*Equal Opportunities for All?* ILEA, 1985).

Handicap:

Disabilities and difficulties become more or less handicapping depending on the expectations of others and on social contexts. Handicaps thus arise from the mismatch between the intellectual, physical, emotional and social behaviour and aspirations of the individual and the expectations, appropriate or otherwise, of the community and society at large. Individuals with disabilities or significant difficulties may be handicapped by their own attitude to them and by the attitudes of others. Of equal significance, the degree to which the individual is handicapped is determined by the educational, social, physical and emotional situations which he or she encounters. Handicapping effects may vary from situation to situation and vary over time. (Fish, 1985)

Disability:

Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. (WHO, 1980)

Impairment:

Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. (WHO, 1980)

These definitions draw the distinction between the inability to do certain things, as a result of disability or impairment and the handicap which results from the conditions which exist in the environment. For example:

- a person using a wheelchair is handicapped when confronted by a flight of steps, but not in an accessible building;
- a person with a hearing impairment is handicapped by a trainer/teacher who mumbles, or in a noisy room, but may not be at all handicapped in a quiet classroom with people who speak clearly.

Special educational needs/Special training needs:

The 1981 Education Act, referring to school provision, defined special educational needs as those which require special provision to be made for them. The term learning difficulty was introduced to describe those who have *significantly greater* difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age. This notion of 'significantly greater difficulty' has been used to describe the range of special needs. These terms are also used in post-school provision.

The 1988 *YTS Special Training Needs Code of Practice*, refers to those who require 'significant extra or specialised training and support beyond that normally needed to gain access to and benefit from YTS'.

● EXERCISE 5A

Individual work

This activity is designed to enable you to consider the ways in which you describe your trainees/students with special needs.

Give each participant a copy of Task Sheet and ask them to complete it individually.

Allow sufficient time to do so.

TASK SHEET C

This activity is designed to enable you to consider the ways in which you describe your trainees/students with special needs.

Think of a trainee/student with special needs with whom you have been working.

Imagine you have been asked to describe her/him to a colleague.

Write down between five and ten statements which you would use.

● ● EXERCISE 5B

Work in pairs

Ask the participants to read their comments to their partners.

Give Task Sheet D to each pair and ask them to complete it.

When this has been completed, discuss the outcomes with the whole group.

You may wish to provide a follow-up activity, asking the participants to go through the same process with some reports they have written or received.

TASK SHEET D

Work in pairs

Read your statements to your partner.

Discuss and underline those statements which say something positive about the trainee/student.

Rewrite all the other statements in positive terms, saying what the trainee/student *can* rather than cannot do.

Here are some examples:

- has poor literacy skills
- can read familiar words and short phrases, can write own name and address
- cannot concentrate
- can concentrate for up to five minutes, without prompting, on practical activities
- is poorly motivated
- is interested in xxxxxx and xxxxxx.

EXERCISE 6

Individual activity

It is easier to understand the experience of your students/trainees by linking it with your own. This exercise is to enable you to explore the experience of not feeling 'able'.

Give each participant Task Sheet E, **Personal experience** 'Sometimes in my life . . .' to work on individually.

TASK SHEET E 'SOMETIMES IN MY LIFE . . .'

It is easier to understand the experience of your trainees/students, by linking it with your own. This exercise is to enable you to explore the experience of not feeling 'able'.

There may have been times when you were trying to learn something but felt less than 'able'.

For example:

- when you were ill
- you were temporarily 'disabled' through accident or illness
- you joined a new school/college/class/course
- you were learning something new

There may be plenty of others.

Identify the times when you did not feel 'able'.

- What were they?
- How did you feel?
- What do you think others thought of you?

Work in pairs

Ask the group to divide into pairs, and to discuss the contents with their partners.

The whole group may discuss the most pertinent features of the experiences they have described.

EXERCISE 7. INSTITUTION POLICY

Small group activity

Many education and training establishments now have a policy relating to the concerns of students with special education/training needs, as a part of their equal opportunities guidelines. Where a policy exists, the extent to which it is implemented and staff are familiar with it, varies.

The aim of this exercise is to focus on your working environment and to assess the extent to which it facilitates or handicaps full participation by trainees/students with special needs.

Small groups of three or four should discuss the questions on Task Sheet F, My Workplace, and prepare to report back the outcomes, at which point the information should be recorded.

It is helpful if you obtain copies of your institution's policy and give them to participants at the end of the session. Other useful publications which you may wish to distribute are:

- *YTS Special Training Needs: A Code of Practice*, MSC, 1988
- *Developing Effective Policy Statements*, NBHS, 1987
- *A College Guide: Meeting Special Educational Needs*, FEU, 1986

TASK SHEET F 'MY WORKPLACE'

Many education and training establishments now have a policy relating to the concerns of students with special education/ training needs. The extent to which these policies are implemented and staff are familiar with them, varies.

The aim of this exercise is to focus on your working environment and to assess the extent to which it facilitates or handicaps full participation by trainees/students with special needs.

Form into small groups of three or four.

Discuss the questions below and prepare to report back the outcomes of the discussions. Keep your own record for a later activity.

1. Does your own establishment have a specific policy relating to provision for trainees/students with special education/training needs?
2. Do you know the key points of the policy?
   List them.
3. If you are not sure of the answers to 1 and 2, where could you find out?
4. Who, within your workplace, has a particular named responsibility for implementing policy with reference to trainees/students with special needs?
5. Is there a 'special needs co-ordinator' or equivalent in your workplace? If so, who is it and how can she/he be contacted?
6. What procedures or aspects of your workplace are likely to *facilitate* full participation by trainees/students with special needs? (You may wish to consider access, enrolment and admissions procedures, teaching methods, etc.)
7. Which factors within your workplace may be likely to *inhibit* full participation by trainees/students with special needs?
8. What plans exist for implementing your policy?
9. How does the policy relate to other aspects of equal opportunities policies at your establishment?

EXERCISE 8. PRESENTATION OF MATERIALS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

Whole group activity

This activity is to help you to focus on the special needs of specific groups of individuals.

It will enable you to start to think about strategies for meeting needs in your establishment.

A list of stimulus resources follows below. You should select either material of your own, or from the list attached, which should focus on issues which are particularly relevant to your context. For example, you wish to focus on the development of self-advocacy skills so you may choose an extract from ' We can change the future'.

Give a short introduction, then present the stimulus materials.

NB. Short, well-chosen extracts from a film/video/audio presentation are often more effective as triggers for discussion than a 'whole' showing.

Small group activity

Ask the participants to form into small groups of three or four.

Ask the small groups to identify the main issues raised by the material, with a particular emphasis on special needs. Add any specific questions relevant to your context.

The small groups should identify and note the changes that would need to take place within an institution in order to meet the special needs identified.

Ask the small groups to report back briefly.

STIMULUS SHEET. VIDEOS AND FILMS

Advocacy Alliance *It's My Life Anyway* Originally a BBC2 *Open Space* programme

BBC *Joey* (the story of Joey Deacon, who wrote *Tongue Tied*), BBC Enterprises

BBC for NBHS *We Can Change the Future*, 1986

Concord Films Council *1975 People First Convention*. 1975

MENCAP London Division Participation Forum, VHS videos:

Speaking for Ourselves, 1982

Have We a Future? City Lit., 1983

A Choice in Our Lives – Doing the Lambeth Talk! Lambeth Social Services, 1985

Let's Work Together, (with CCETSW), 1987

Open University *Finding a Voice* BBC, 1986

SOURCES OF VIDEOS AND FILMS ABOUT PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES:

BBC Enterprises, Woodston House, Oundle Road, Peterborough PR2 9PZ or Room 503, Villiers House, The Broadway, London W5 2PA.

Concord Films Council, 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BJ.

Mental Health Film Council, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED.

PERSONAL ACTION PLANS

You may be thinking about the enormous changes in policy and attitudes necessary to meet special education/training needs efficiently. It is important to realise that *you can* do something about it.

EXERCISE 9

Individual activity

The purpose of this exercise is to enable you to identify a task or series of tasks which you can implement. The outcome should be to increase the participation in your establishment of trainees/students with special needs.

1. Choose a specific area of particular relevance to you in your work on which to focus. Possible areas include:
   - recruitment
   - admissions
   - attitudes
   - programme design
   - teaching/training methods
   - advice/guidance
   - access
   - support
   - programme content
   - assessment/exams

   etc.

   (It might be useful to work with colleagues from the same subject/programme area, so your personal action plans can relate to one another.)
2. Identify a task or series of tasks, which you can achieve. Your first step might be very small but if everyone in your establishment makes one small step, a positive start will have been made.

   Some examples:
   - checking that the content of your work is appropriately organised;
   - making sure that trainees/students can get into the workplace;
   - giving colleagues positive support.
3. State how it will improve provision for trainees/students with special education/training needs
4. Set a date by which you will have carried out the task.
5. Contract with another course member to check with each other by the specified date whether or not the plan has been carried out.

Guidelines for facilitators

At the end of the session, you may wish to ask participants to read out their plans to the group to receive feedback and suggestions.

The personal action plans may be photocopied and circulated after the session.

It is useful to set a follow-up session/review date for the whole group.

TASK SHEET G Name _____

1. To enhance participation by trainees/students with special needs in the life of my own institution, I will:

2. This action will improve our provision in the following way:

3. I will do it by:

4. I will contract with _____ (name)

to check that I have done it, by _____ (date)

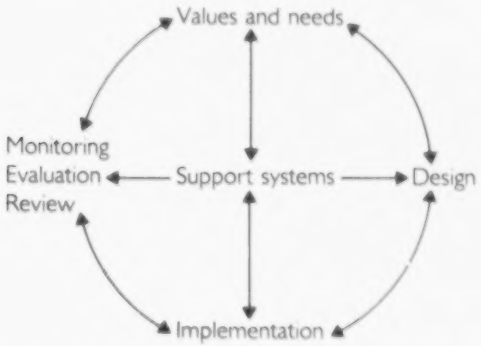
4. ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this section is to give an overview of the complex processes involved in the development of a training programme/curriculum. The underlying principles are the same for any group of learners, but are considered here in relation to trainees/students with special needs.

The questions of how to develop a programme, where to start and what to take into account are familiar, and everyone has probably found answers to some of these already.

Presented here is a framework which many staff will recognise as the curriculum model to be found in various FEU publications and which they are likely to have found useful already. The key word is *framework*. It is often valuable to have a complete overview of what you want to do and how you want to do it, before launching into the detail.

A MODEL FRAMEWORK



THE FEATURES OF THE FRAMEWORK

The first point to note is that it is circular. This is deliberate, for programme development is best seen as a circular process. It is not something which you do once, but something which needs to be repeated in a series of processes which enable you to review, then adjust and improve any element of the framework.

SIGNPOST

Element 2, **Curriculum/ Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies,** looks at this process in detail.

Secondly, in a circular process it is possible to start at any point. It may be the case that you have been presented with a programme which you have to implement, or you may have a final evaluation of a programme which you then want to modify for the next year or session intake. The model allows for this. It also shows what main features should be taken into account.

VALUES AND NEEDS

These are the basic building blocks of any programme.

The values and attitudes which you possess affect the way you think about the learners, so developing a positive attitude towards trainees/students with special needs is crucial. This involves starting from what the trainees/students *can* do rather than viewing them as deficient in some way. It serves to focus attention on their needs and how you can enable them to be satisfied.

SIGNPOST

Element 3, **Devising Individual Learning Programmes**, offers a step-by-step approach to this process, based on an analysis of individual needs.

Consideration must also be given to the context in which learning is to take place. Knowing what is expected and why enables you to plan and develop more effectively.

Above all else, identifying and analysing the needs of the trainee/student helps to make the programme relevant.

DESIGN

Design is the process by which values and needs are translated into relevant programmes. The resulting programmes are likely to range from standard off-the-shelf courses leading to recognised national qualifications, to courses/programmes specially designed for groups, organisations or individuals.

The key features of design are:

- the consideration and statement of your intentions (usually via aims and objectives);
- the application of such principles as equality of opportunity, flexibility and progression in planning;
- the selection of appropriate strategies for delivery and assessment;
- the consideration of how trainees/students learn best.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is the process by which programme design is delivered to the trainee/student and it involves ensuring that the trainees/students obtain the fullest benefits from the learning opportunities provided.

People with special needs are unlikely to be best catered for through 'chalk and talk' teaching methods in which the learner is passive. A full range of learning opportunities will be required.

SIGNPOST

This is discussed in detail in Element 6, **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials.**

If programme design is based on such principles as equality, flexibility and progression, it follows that a broader range of teaching, training and learning strategies is likely to be needed. Building on previous experience, and widening and deepening understanding suggests the need for a variety of approaches.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The trainees'/students' success can be assessed by the progress that they make and the development of skills and/or knowledge.

To judge the effectiveness of the programme, it is necessary to collect appropriate information about its structure and operation in relation to meeting needs. Having made judgements about the relative strengths and weaknesses, modifications can then be made to the appropriate parts.

SIGNPOST

The processes of monitoring, evaluation and review are detailed in the final section of Element 2, **Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies**

The processes involved here are monitoring, evaluation and review.

Monitoring is usually taken to mean the continuous scrutiny of the performance of a programme as it is running; checking the effectiveness of organisation, learner support and learning materials.

Evaluation involves the collection of information on a more structured, periodic basis from all participants.

SIGNPOST

The processes of review and assessment of trainee/student progress and achievement are detailed in Element 4, **Assessment and Review**

There are many ways of carrying out monitoring and evaluation; interviews, log books and questionnaires are used frequently, but it is important to use approaches which will provide most effectively the information which you require.

The information gathered forms the basis for **review** – the process by which all or part of the programme is appraised. The involvement of all participants is important. Through this process, guidelines on how to improve the quality of the programme will emerge (for example, the reordering of the content, the reidentification of needs, the use of different learning strategies.)

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

No programme can be designed or delivered in a vacuum, it requires support systems to make it work. The success or failure of provision for learners with special needs depends more than other forms of provision on adequate support systems.

Support systems can fulfil the following functions:

- formulation of broad principles and policy within the institution;
- provision and management of resources (including staff, materials and equipment);
- arrangements for co-operation with other agencies;
- provision of advice and guidance services for both staff and learners.

With a range this wide, knowing what support is needed when, and how and where to get it, makes all the difference.

SIGNPOST

Element 9, Sources of Help and Advice, examines support systems in-house, locally, regionally and nationally.

SIGNPOST

Element 8, Guidance and Support, assists the development of personal guidance skills.

Here, then, is a framework for development. As each feature has been explained and explored a number of questions were raised. The rest of this package attempts to help in finding the answers.

SECTION 5. APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK

● ● ● EXERCISE 10. THE FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

Small group activity

This exercise is designed to help you become more familiar with the programme development model outlined above. It enables you to examine all aspects of the cycle, in this case using the starting point of an evaluation of a course or training programme.

You will need:

- either to use your own evaluation of a course/programme which you are currently running;
- or to use an example from elsewhere.

Each group should act as a review group for the course/programme.

Look at the evaluation presented. It suggests the need for some modifications to the programme.

What issues do you need to consider?

Do these issues relate to: – analysis of need?
– design?
– implementation?
– evaluation?
– support?

Are there any other important issues?

Add these to your list.

Keep a copy of the course/training programme outline available for the next activity.

● ● ● EXERCISE 11. APPLYING THE PROCESS TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Small group activity

This exercise enables you to apply the process outlined in the framework in order to meet the special needs of some individual trainees/students.

You will need either some case-history examples of your own trainees/students or to use the examples given in the **Resources Section**. (You will be meeting these people at various points throughout the pack.)

Take the course outline from Exercise 10.

Attempt to answer the following questions as they apply to the above individuals.

1. **Analysis of need**

   To what extent does the programme meet the actual rather than apparent needs of the trainee/student?

2. **Design**

   How does the programme lend itself to individual trainee's/student's needs?

3. **Implementation**

   How can the learning approaches be made more responsive to the needs of trainees/students?

SIGNPOST

If you have not yet decided which element to study next, refer to 'Analysing the needs identified' on Page 12 of the **User's Guide**.

4. **Evaluation**

   What are the important issues in judging the effectiveness of the programme for each trainee/student?

5. **Support**

   What extra support mechanisms are necessary for teacher/ trainer and learner?

You may have had some difficulty in answering these questions. The rest of this package seeks to help you look for the answers.

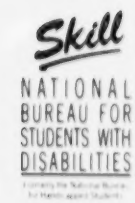
SUMMARY

EVALUATION CHECK-LIST

You should now be able to:

- recognise and counter the effects of stereotyped images and assumptions;
- understand the difference between the terms: impairment, disability, handicap and special education/training needs;
- recognise the negative connotations of some terminology in current usage and avoid using such terms;
- describe trainees/students with special needs in positive terms;
- describe how the experience of not feeling 'able' may affect attitudes towards you and your own view of yourself;
- identify the major features of your institution's policy on special needs;
- consider the factors which facilitate or inhibit participation by trainees/students with special needs, in your workplace;
- define and implement a task or series of tasks, which will promote the participation of trainees/students with special needs in your workplace.

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT GROUP
TRAINING
AGENCY


Skill
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